REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the above identified application in light of the Office Action dated June 1, 2005. Claims 1-38 remain presented for examination. Claims 1, 16 and 31 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention, in terms which distinguish over the art of record, and in particular to overcome the formal rejection.

Claims 1, 16 and 31 are the only independent claims.

Claims 1-11, 13-25 and 27-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of U.S. Patent 6,199,065 (Kenyon). Claims 12, 26 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Applicants' Admitted Prior Art in view Kenyon and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,269,330 (Cidon). Claims 1-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite.

Rejections of Claims 1-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 112:

The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention to the points raised in paragraph 3 of the Office Action. In particular, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 16 and 31 to clarify how contemporaneous time out testing is performed on a particular session data entry of a database that contains session data for a plurality of sessions. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Rejections of Claims 1-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

The present invention, as defined by independent claim 1, relates to a method for maintaining http session data in a server system serving a network, the system including at least one network server. The method comprises storing in a database session data for a plurality of sessions serviced by the server. The method further comprises performing time out testing of session data as a request for that particular session occurs. Newly amended claim 1 further recites that this contemporaneous testing is performed prior to utilizing the particular session data. Support for this feature is found in the specification in the first full paragraph of page 15 of

the application as filed. Claim 1 further recites that even if a time out has been detected by this test, the session data is not then invalidated in the database. The method further comprises invalidating session data at a particular time that is independent of when the contemporaneous testing is performed.

As described in the specification (inter alia, page 8, lines 9-19), the above described method frees the system from performing invalidation procedures in real time. System resources are thus conserved at potential times of high volume access to session data. Invalidation of appropriate session data can be scheduled to occur when demands on the system are low.

Applicants' discussion of the prior art fails to teach this feature of claim 1 wherein a time out is detected in response to a server request of particular session data and invalidation of this data is not performed. In Paragraph 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that "AAPA does not explicitly teach performing contemporaneous time out testing of session data every time a request is received for said particular session data and allowing said particular session data to remain valid ["not invalidating" in the language of amended claim 1] in said database even after said contemporaneous testing has indicated that the corresponding session has time[d] out". The Examiner then references Kenyon as teaching this feature.

Kenyon relates to a system for accessing information by a user over a communications network such as the Internet or an Intranet. As described in the Abstract of Kenyon, in order to provide a degree of fault tolerance, the site is constituted by a number of similar sub-sites. A user, who requests the supply of particular information as part of a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is initially connected to one sub-site having a respective server and a login procedure. In the event of certain faults in the one sub-site, the user is connected to a second sub-site without any requirement to repeat the login procedure, as a result of all sub-sites being provided with all user login details, which are stored by session daemons.

The Examiner has cited Kenyon for teaching a request for remapping (to a different sub-site) when a time out occurs: "eventually the initially connected server will time out and the DNS [Domain Name Service] will select a different one ..., which upon checking with its associated session daemon 9c to determine the user associated with the session key, will be able to continue with the requirements of that particular user since it already has his details" (col. 4, lines 37-42). This feature of Kenyon relates to the problem associated with a site connection having been established and something within that site then failing.

In Kenyon a DNS mapping between machine names and numbers "are only valid for a predetermined length of time and a web browser can only use a particular mapping while it is still valid" (Kenyon; col. 4, lines 17-19). When it times out, the browser has to request the mapping again. In particular, a sufficiently short time-out period (e.g. 30 seconds) is established so this timer expiration will trigger the selection of a different site promptly. This feature of Kenyon thus minimizes the inconveniences to a user by not leaving him connected to a (potentially) unresponsive site (and not requiring him to log in again).

This "time out" feature of Kenyon is distinguishable from the time out feature addressed in the present invention in which session data (and not the DNS mapping to a server) is the information that has timed out. Further, the time out feature of Kenyon essentially relates to terminating the use of data currently in use upon the expiration of a timer. In this manner automatic switching will occur to a different server (to preclude a user from remaining connected to a site that may have failed).

In the present invention, the time out function does not relate to server connections, but rather to session data (e.g., shopping cart information of a particular user as described in page 3 of the specification). As described in the Background section of the specification "[t]he session data being maintained therefore must be invalidated at some point since it ... [becomes] stale data that is no longer of any value" (specification; page 7, lines 7-8). The present invention is directed to when this invalidation operation is performed. In particular, while contemporaneous testing is performed to detect whether the session data has timed out (to preclude using "stale data"), the actual invalidation operation is performed at a time independent of this contemporaneous testing.

Kenyon is directed to a software means of causing periodic switching of hardware components to occur to provide fault tolerance of such hardware failures. Applicants submit that neither AAPA nor Kenyon, either singly or in combination teach or suggest the features of claim 1. In particular, neither of these references teaches or suggests the feature that, when contemporaneous testing of session data determines it to have timed out, the session data remains valid in the database and that actual invalidation of session data is performed at a time that is independent of the contemporaneous tests. Accordingly, claim 1 is deemed patentable over the combination of AAPA and Barker.

Independent claims 16 and 31 contain the same features as claim 1 and are deemed patentable for the same reasons.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Claims 1, 16 and 31 are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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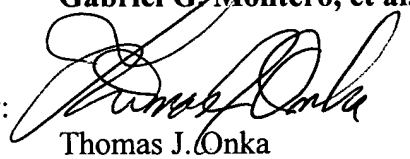
By: 

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